

## Tulsa County Divorce Courts Show the 'Evil' Is Spreading

At Present Rate More Than 1,000 Cases Will Be Filed During the Year.

### NO AGREEMENT ON CAUSES

Numerous Varying Opinions Given to Explain Increase of Marital Wrecks.

The record of the divorce evil, which Tulsa judges, as well as to those in many sections of the country, are at a loss to explain except through the so-called "nervous breakdown" of the citizenship of the United States since the close of the war, has greatly increased the number of divorces for divorce per se.

The records of Tulsa courts show that in the first six months of 1919, 1,446 petitions for divorce have been filed in the circuit court, and 202 petitions in superior court, a total of 648 petitions of this character in seven months as compared with 500 petitions filed in the two courts in the 12 months ending December 31, 1918.

The state records of St. Louis, which in January, 1918, showed 1,954 decrees granted for the year ending Dec. 31, show 2,019 granted for the year ending Dec. 31, 1919. Should the present rate of petitions filed in divorce cases continue in Tulsa county, more than 2,000 petitions will have been filed before the close of this year, and, placing the number of decrees granted at four-fifths of the number of petitions filed, the divorce record of the city and county will show 800 decrees the present year. This is double under one-third the number granted in St. Louis during corresponding time, although the later city and county has a population several times as great as Tulsa's.

**Early Marriages Not Blamed.** Judge Richmond S. Cole of the divorce court does not agree with the theory of many judges that early marriages have any influence on the number of divorce petitions filed. He said that the world records of the countries of Europe show that parents make all arrangements for the marriage of their children, show that few divorces result from such marriages. In the case of early marriages, Judge Cole said that he knew from the number of cases brought before him that early marriages were more likely to be permanent than when persons waited. Judge Landwehr said: "For that reason I have made it a rule to require an answer to be filed. I insist on all legal formalities in order to delay the hearing in the hope that a reconciliation may occur."

In advocating the theory that early and inexperienced marriages are the chief cause of divorce in St. Louis, Judge Taylor said: "I believe considerable time should elapse between the time the suit is filed and the time the cause is decided. Judge Landwehr said: "For that reason I have made it a rule to delay the hearing in the hope that a reconciliation may occur."

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**Women File Most Suits.**

The vast majority of divorce petitions are filed by women. This is due, I think, to the fact that in most cases their wives, the men not being able to go into court and make allegations against their wives, and they let matters drift, leaving the women to file the petition.

"My observation has been that divorce suits are brought largely by persons who have not a proper sense of obligation toward society, to take responsibility of marriage very lightly. The greatest number of divorces are granted on the grounds of indignities, with abandonment and non-support following in the order named. In many of the abandonment cases there is another man or woman in the case."

"Comparatively few of the divorce cases which come before me allege that the man could not support her as she had been supported or that he did not take care of her as she expected him to. This leads to nagging, to charges and counter charges and soon they were in the divorce courts."

**Divorces Not Blamed.** The records of Tulsa county show a much higher comparative number of persons having divorce actions upon the grounds of infidelity and abandonment than the records of other sections of the country. The large number of abandonment cases

would be prevented if the law made it a crime for a man to abandon his wife and family. But under the present law, while a man may be fined and sent to jail for failure to provide for his wife and family, the wife, in many cases, is deprived of any other recourse.

From a series of interviews given out by circuit judges of St. Louis on the divorce problem confronting the courts of that section of the country, two are agreed as to the cause of divorce and they are not in agreement upon the remedies to be applied.

Judge Hartmann, in speaking of his private practice before entering the judgeship, said:

"The great majority of cases which I handled were instituted by women, and most of them were based on general indignities, mis-treatment and cruelty. Only three-fourths of the cases, in my opinion, are of that character. About 25 per cent of the cases are based on abandonment, and in most desertion cases it develops that one or the other had gotten tired of his life companion and had taken up with someone more agreeable."

Speaking as one of the circuit judges, and having in mind the interests of the parties involved, he said: "I believe that society is best served by granting divorces freely where no children are involved. Where children are born of the marriage, the lines should be drawn more tightly and marital ties in these latter cases should not be severed except in cases of extreme necessity or infidelity. The court should be granted whatever reasonable grounds are alleged and proven. If divorces are not granted immorality will be increased."

### Not Taken Seriously.

Federal Circuit Judge D. G. Taylor, in the opinion that he advised the public that many divorces are responsible for the large number of divorce cases. As opposed to this opinion, Judge Frank Landwehr stated that he had not been of the opinion that many divorces were due to hasty marriages. Judge Landwehr had made a practice of asking the parties to a divorce action how long they had known each other before the marriage, and the answer in most cases was from one to two years.

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His visit to Tulsa came at the close of a tour of inspection of the state Dr. Sullivan explained to him as being much surprised at the spirit and effectiveness found in the employment service of Oklahoma. After a conference with local employment officials he made a survey of the situation as it is in this vicinity. He came to Tulsa from Oklahoma City and left Saturday night for St. Louis. The methods and policies of the Tulsa office were commended by the director general's assistants.

**Unusual Demand for Coal.**

GALVESTON, Texas, Aug. 9.—An unusual demand for American coal for west coast towns of South America is reported by marine interests here. Shipments of export coal to South America through this port will give 5,000 tons weekly. It is said, and the demand indicates for an indefinite period. Most of the coal loaded here for export is mined in Oklahoma.

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